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ON A

DISTANT PROSPECT

OF

ETON College.

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BRITISH MUSEUM

A N

O D E

On a Diſtant Proſpect of

ETON COLLEGE.

E diſtant Spires, ye antique Towers,
That crown the watry Glade,
Where grateful Science ſtill adores
Her *Henry*'s holy Shade;
And ye that from the ſtately Brow
Of *Windſor*'s Heights th' Expanſe below
Of Grove, of Lawn, of Mead ſurvey,
Whoſe Turf, whoſe Shade, whoſe Flowers among
Wanders the hoary *Thames* along
His Silver-winding Way.

Ah

Ah happy Hills, ah pleaſing Shade,
Ah Fields belov'd in vain,
Where once my careleſs Childhood ſtray'd,
A Stranger yet to Pain!
I feel the Gales, that from ye blow,
A momentary Bliſs beſtow,
As waving freſh their gladſome Wing,
My weary Soul they ſeem to ſooth,
And, redolent of Joy and Youth,
To breathe a ſecond Spring.

Say, Father *Thames*, for thou haſt ſeen
Full many a ſprightly Race
Diſporting on thy Margent green
The Paths of Pleaſure trace,
Who foremoſt now delight to cleave
With pliant Arm thy glaſſy Wave?
The captive Linnet which enthrall?
What idle Progeny ſucceed
To chaſe the rolling Circle's Speed,
Or urge the flying Ball?

While

While ſome on earneſt Buſineſs bent
Their murm'ring Labours ply,
'Gainſt graver Hours, that bring Conſtraint
To ſweeten Liberty:
Some bold Adventurers diſdain
The Limits of their little Reign,
And unknown Regions dare deſcry:
Still as they run they look behind,
They hear a Voice in every Wind,
And ſnatch a fearful Joy.

Gay Hope is theirs by Fancy fed,
Leſs pleaſing when poſſeſt;
The Tear forgot as ſoon as ſhed,
The Sunſhine of the Breaſt,
Theirs buxom Health of roſy Hue,
Wild Wit, Invention ever-new,
And lively Chear of Vigour born;
The thoughtleſs Day, the eaſy Night,
The Spirits pure, the Slumbers light,
That fly th' Approach of Morn.

Alas,

Alas, regardleſs of their Doom,
The little Victims play!
No Senſe have they of Ills to come,
Nor Care beyond to-day:
Yet ſee how all around 'em wait
The Miniſters of human Fate,
And black Misfortune's baleful Train!
Ah, ſhew them where in Ambuſh ſtand
To ſeize their Prey the murth'rous Band!
Ah, tell them they are Men!

Theſe ſhall the Fury Paſſions tear,
The Vulturs of the Mind,
Diſdainful Anger, pallid Fear,
And Shame that ſculks behind;
Or pineing Love ſhall waſte their Youth,
Or Jealouſy with rankling Tooth,
That inly gnaws the ſecret Heart,
And Envy wan, and faded Care,
Grim-viſag'd comfortleſs Deſpair,
And Sorrow's piercing Dart.

Ambition This ſhall tempt to riſe,
Then whirl the Wretch from high,
To bitter Scorn a Sacrifice,
And grinning Infamy.
The Stings of Falſhood Thoſe ſhall try,
And hard Unkindneſs' alter'd Eye,
That mocks the Tear it forc'd to flow;
And keen Remorſe with Blood defil'd,
And moody Madneſs laughing wild
Amid ſevereſt Woe.

Lo, in the Vale of Years beneath
A grieſly Troop are ſeen,
The painful Family of Death,
More hideous than their Queen:
This racks the Joints, this fires the Veins,
That every labouring Sinew ſtrains,
Thoſe in the deeper Vitals rage:
Lo, Poverty, to fill the Band,
That numbs the Soul with icy Hand,
And ſlow-conſuming Age.

To each his Suff'rings: all are Men,
Condemn'd alike to groan,
The Tender for another's Pain,
Th' Unfeeling for his own.
Yet ah! Why ſhould they know their Fate?
Since Sorrow never comes too late,
And Happineſs too ſwiftly flies.
Thought would deſtroy their Paradiſe,
No more; where Ignorance is Bliſs,
'Tis Folly to be wiſe.

F I N I S.

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